

Chapter 1

Introduction to the Comprehensive Conservation and Management Plan

What Is the Comprehensive Conservation and Management Plan?

In 1985, the Buzzards Bay Project was established with the goal of developing and implementing management recommendations that would preserve and protect water quality and living resources in Buzzards Bay. The development of the Buzzards Bay CCMP is an example of an emerging nationwide effort to develop management strategies that take into account the uniqueness of certain coastal areas. This "special area management" approach is being successfully carried out in several other regions, including Chesapeake Bay, the Great Lakes, Puget Sound, and San Francisco Bay. This Comprehensive Conservation and Management Plan (CCMP) is one of the first of several such plans currently under development in other estuarine areas designated as part of the National Estuary Program of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).

This Comprehensive Conservation and Management Plan for Buzzards Bay lays out an approach for achieving the goal of a clean and healthy Bay. The CCMP is based on the scientific and technical information gathered by the Buzzards Bay Project over the past five years and an analysis of the present regulatory programs designed to protect the Bay.

The Buzzards Bay CCMP is a three-volume document. The main document is the Management Recommendations and Action Plans. It contains a synopsis of the problems facing the region and detailed recommendations on how to protect and preserve water quality and living resources in Buzzards Bay. The Management Recommendations and Action Plans identifies what actions need to be taken and who should take them. Two volumes complement the Management Recommendations and Action Plans — the CCMP Financial Plan and the CCMP Monitoring Plan.

Environmental protection often costs money and uses human resources. The Financial Plan will identify the costs associated with certain management actions recommended in the CCMP and financial strategies for meeting them. The Buzzards Bay Project has investigated a variety of funding sources to underwrite the costs of implementing recommendations in the CCMP and this information is also included in the Financial Plan.

Environmental management also requires a coherent and effective monitoring strategy to determine if actions taken are effective and warrant further expenditures. In order to judge the success of this Project over time, data that show a reduction in pollution discharged into the Bay must be collected. These needs are addressed in the Monitoring Plan, which contains the overall monitoring goals for Buzzards Bay, the specific

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environmental quality questions being asked, and the methods and approaches to answer those questions.

Those seeking detailed information on various aspects of the Project will have access to other documents including a Pollution Characterization Report; a Report on Living Resources of Buzzards Bay; and the Buzzards Bay Project Technical Report Series, which contains technical and scientific papers on issues and problems facing Buzzards Bay.

During the summer and fall of 1990, the CCMP was presented to the public for review and comment. At the same time, it was sent to all government organizations that have the responsibility to implement its recommendations. A series of meetings and hearings were held throughout Buzzards Bay to discuss the recommendations and receive comments. This document reflects the comments that were received both verbally and in writing during the review period. It also reflects additional comments received on an interim draft completed in May 1991.

Completion of the CCMP is not the end of the Buzzards Bay Project, but a beginning. Implementation of the plan will be a top priority for the Project in the coming years. Because new insights and technological advances are expected, periodic revisions will serve to update the plan.

What Does the Management Plan Address?

The Buzzards Bay Project identified three pollution problems that require management attention: health risks from pathogens associated with the improper treatment or disposal of human wastes, and the subsequent closure of shellfish beds; excessive nutrient inputs to the Bay, and their potential for causing water quality degradation and loss of habitat; and contamination of fish, shellfish, and lobsters by toxic substances such as trace metals, hydrocarbons, pesticides, and polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs). The loss of marine habitat and resources because of pollution and physical disturbances is also a major concern of the Project. These problems are the focus of the management recommendations in the CCMP.

This CCMP has evolved from discussions with the Buzzards Bay Project's committees, concerned citizens, local officials, and the public. Scientific and technical studies sponsored by the Project, in part, served as the basis for the plan. This information, combined with the knowledge gained from other estuarine programs and studies, has been transformed into a set of management recommendations and strategies. These recommendations cover a wide range of activities including changing individual habits, strengthening regulations and bylaws, and planning for actions that minimize the impact of pollution sources such as stormwater runoff and wastewater. Recommendations are found in Chapter 5, which includes 11 action plans; in Chapter 6, where special problems faced by the City of New Bedford are discussed; and in Chapter 7, where specific options for management of land use are presented. These action plans form the "core" of the CCMP. Other chapters in this document provide additional information that supports the major action recommendations. In summary, the CCMP identifies what needs to be done, why it is necessary, and who should do it.

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The CCMP is written for the benefit of the public — the people who live around Buzzards Bay, those who visit the region, and anyone who uses or benefits from the Bay. The CCMP is directed at various target audiences and includes specific recommendations for the public and for federal, state, and local agencies.

The municipalities around Buzzards Bay are a major target audience for actions in the CCMP. This is because nonpoint sources of pollution and cumulative impacts caused by growth and development (including pathogen contamination and nitrogen loading) are leading cause of habitat loss and water quality degradation in much of the Bay; these impacts must be managed and controlled locally. The state and federal governments have limited authority and capacity to deal with problems of this kind. The future of Buzzards Bay rests with the communities and their ability to control the quality of their environment.

Among the municipalities in the Buzzards Bay region, New Bedford is beset with a special set of problems. One feature of Buzzards Bay demography is that 60% of the population within the drainage basin resides within the greater New Bedford area. The dense development and intense industrial activity in and around New Bedford has resulted in a highly contaminated estuary. Solutions to New Bedford's problems will require close coordination and cooperation between the city and state and federal agencies. Some of the pollution from New Bedford affects mainly that city and adjacent towns. For these reasons an entire chapter focuses on the special needs and problems faced by New Bedford. For the most part, however, the CCMP focuses primarily on non-point and cumulative pollution impact issues outside the greater New Bedford area allowing state and federal efforts to address the Superfund site cleanup and the Sewage Treatment Wastewater Facility ongoing siting and upgrade.

Management Plan Organization

This Management Plan is organized into chapters on significant issues. Chapter 2 describes the history of the Project and Management Plan; Chapter 3 covers salient features of the Bay and its surrounding drainage basin; and Chapter 4 describes the scientific findings of the Project, particularly the characterization of pollution sources in the Bay. Chapter 5 contains the action plans; Chapter 6 highlights the special needs of New Bedford; Chapter 7 assesses various strategies for land-use management; and Chapter 8 outlines the Buttermilk Bay case study. Chapter 9 presents a strategy for how the action plans should be implemented; and the index, glossary, and appendixes facilitate the use of this document.

In August 1991, representatives of EPA and the Commonwealth of Massachusetts signed a pledge of commitment to support the goals of the Buzzards Bay Management Conference, to restore and protect environmental quality, and to implement the Comprehensive Conservation and Management Plan. The pledge underscores the long-term commitment to the vision of a clean Bay for future generations.

**Pledge for
BUZZARDS BAY**

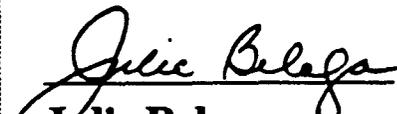
WE, the undersigned, find and declare that —

Buzzards Bay is an important natural resource that provides incomparable beauty and significant recreational and commercial benefits;

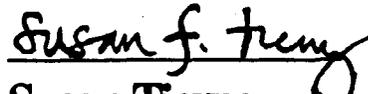
The Bay's living resources, water quality, and aesthetic character have suffered from rapid development and other human uses; and

Restoration and protection of the Bay's environmental quality require focused management by a partnership of Federal, State and local governments, affected industries, academia, and the public.

WE therefore pledge to support the goals of the Buzzards Bay Management Conference and we commit to restore and protect the environmental quality of Buzzards Bay through the implementation of the Comprehensive Conservation and Management Plan.


Julie Belaga

**Regional Administrator
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
Region I**


Susan Tierney

**Secretary
Massachusetts Executive
Office of Environmental Affairs**

Dated this 16th day of August, 1991